1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

months. Several days are occupied in simply waiting for the hide to dry following various 81
steps in the process. The most difficult part of the work lies in removing the flesh and hair. Two women can do this in about ten or twelve hours. A family will sometimes purchase a hide which has been fleshed and cleaned and then finish the tanning; such a skin sells for from six to eight dollars. Each softening of the hide takes two people about eight hours. The final smoking must be carefully watched and, depending on the size of the skin, occupies from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half. A fully tanned moosehide represents about fifty work hours; a small caribou skin, somewhat less time.

Fire. Two general types of fire may be distinguished, fires made in stoves and campfires 72
built outdoors. Stove fires are built from small dry kindling split from a section of log and shaved toward one end with a knife. After the kindling has caught, larger sections of cut wood are added. Outdoor fires are generally built with kindling obtained from the dry small limbs found toward the bottom of spruce trees. A large double handful of these twigs is collected and thoroughly broken into small bits. Larger wood is also collected and set to one side. After the kindling has been well broken up, so that it forms a compact mass, it is ignited. When the fire is well caught, the pile of brush may be tipped over from behind and lightly pressed down. More larger sticks are added. In winter, snow is first cleared from a fireplace before a blaze is set, and a thick layer of brush placed on the ground in front of the fire to prevent moccasins from becoming wet in the melting snow (Pl. 3, a).

People can very much at ease around open fires, readily passing things over the flames and handling hot sticks without any sign of timidity. When working outdoors in fall or winter, men and women generally build fires behind them to keep warm. In standing or sitting around an open fire, people keep their backs to the blaze. If they face the fire, as sometimes becomes necessary, they look over either then into the flames. This habit avoids the temporary blindness that follows prolonged, concentrated exposure to bright light. To keep wind from fires, a tarp is sometimes erected on the windward side. In cold weather such protection has the additional function of directing the heat of a fire into the camp. Prevailing attitudes, expressed by men and women, tend to emphasize the smoke, drab, and other inconveniences associated with open fires as compared to stove fires. Smoke is regarded as detrimental to children's health. There is also the fear that children may burn themselves playing around an open fire.

Thirty smoke fires for smoking hides are made from rotten spruce wood which may be 72
mixed with a little green spruce brush. Green spruce brush and green wood are collected 71
for the light smudges used to keep flies off drying meat or for the preliminary smoking of 71
hides.

Care is always taken to prevent campfires from spreading. A shallow trench is dug 72
around the embers with dirt, sand or with a stick, and the hose dire kindled over the coals. Damage to dwellings from fire is not an unfamiliar experience to the people. Tent fires are especially common; these occurred during the period of field work. Two of these blazes were caused by candles being left too close to the roofs of well tents while the occupants were in sleep.

Kerosene lamps and candles are in common use and a few families also own Coleman 73

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373 lanterns which are operated with gasoline. People are cautious in their use. Flashlights are owned and used. They are a source of amusement in late summer when two groups of young people, meeting at night, try to blind each other with the beams.

EXCHANGE

439 A portion of the resources, namely furs, which are derived from the environment, are not directly utilized by the Indian but, after being briefly processed, are converted into consumer and capital goods which have their origin outside the Kaska area. In other words, trapped and stretched pelts are sold or traded. Unlike the white trapper, the Indian confines his interest in fur to the immediate process necessary to convert his fur into cash. Except for rumors of price trends, which he occasionally picks up in Lower Post, he has neither knowledge nor interest in those factors of the world market that ultimately determine the valuation placed on his pelts. Similarly the Indian largely fails to appreciate the economic forces that determine the price of the commodities which he buys. As a result hedging, that is, holding skins from the market in expectation of an increase in value is never practiced.

435 The value set upon the Indian's fur by the white traders of the North, as well as the prices which the Indian is required to pay for the necessities of living, are both largely controlled by a series of intricate mechanisms involving the economic system of western society, over which the local traders lack control. However, despite the fact that price and value are largely determined by conditions of the world market, differences occur in the amounts paid for fur and prices charged by different traders. The Indian is aware of these local variations. He also knows that competition between local trading companies is apt to benefit him by increasing the amount he receives for fur and by lowering somewhat the prices that he must pay for goods. Table 6 indicates the approximate prices paid for common furs in Lower Post in spring, 1944.

437 Competitive bidding by traders is common. As the trader inspects the pelts and appraises their value the Indian stands back matter-of-factly without speaking. No emotion, not even interest, is betrayed in his features. When the bid is written out and read, the furs are put back in the sack from which they were taken, still without a word of comment. If later the Indian comes back, dissatisfied with the bid of the trader's competitor, he will signify that he is now ready to sell.

Theoretically the Indian can sell his fur to the highest bidder and with the proceeds buy what equipment and food he needs from the cheapest selling trader. There are several reasons why this procedure is rarely followed. In the first place, a trader short of ready cash frequently offers the seller a good price for fur, provided that the catch is turned over to him in order to settle an outstanding debt or in trade for additional merchandise. Such a transaction is almost pure barter. Another reason for failing to take advantage of the open market is the fact that a trapper may feel obligated to let a particular trader have part of a catch, regardless of the value which this trader sets on the skins, in order to exhibit his ability as a trapper and thus maintain future credit standing with that firm. While such transactions deprive the Indian of some of the value of his fur, they are never resented. Someday, illness or poor luck may make the good opinion of one or both traders important. Individuals recognize strongly the advantages in being friendly with "strangers."